

that also help the people who care for them. Many caregivers for people with Alzheimer's find themselves, caring for their patients in the middle of the night. Telehealth technologies have been developed to let someone else from their caregiver support group know that they're up and available to talk, even at 3:30 in the morning. A "presence lamp" system uses simple home security sensors and the internet to turn on a lamp in one person's home when their friend also happens to be awake in the middle of the night, and vice versa. It becomes a lifeline between family caregivers who could reach out for emotional and social support, even in those darkest and bleakest of hours.

All these innovations point to the fact that a technological revolution is going on right now in home health care solutions, and it's time health care reform brought those solutions into the mix. If done right, reform should do more than give affordable, quality care to all Americans. As these technologies prove, health care reform should also stimulate the economy with new jobs and industries that will allow us to care for our rapidly aging population.

Home health care will help put America at the forefront of a new health care services industry that will generate more than a million new jobs that can never be outsourced. Those jobs will come from inventing new home-based care technologies and using those technologies to deliver virtual and remote care services here at home and abroad.

I have already introduced legislation that uses the concept of coordinated home health care to help people on Medicare live healthier by managing their chronic conditions and reducing duplicative and unnecessary services, hospitalization, and other health care costs. This bill has broad bipartisan support, from Senators BURR and CHAMBLISS to Senators STABENOW, MIKULSKI, and, previously, the late Senator Kennedy.

My bill, the Independence at Home Act, establishes a 3-year Medicare pilot project that helps Medicare beneficiaries with multiple chronic conditions remain independent for as long as possible in a comfortable environment. It provides for coordinated-care programs that hold physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and other team members accountable for quality, patient satisfaction, and mandatory minimum savings. The act was accepted into the Senate Finance Committee health reform bill and I will pull out all the stops to see it included as part of the final health reform legislation that the Senate will vote on.

Before Congress finishes writing the bill for 21st century health care reform, it is important to define what Americans are paying for, how best to deliver much-needed personalized care to patients where they live, work, and play, and how to make the U.S. a world leader in home-based care industries. The

home can become a fundamental location for health and wellness and also a priority for reform. In addition, all this can be done with a focus on stimulating our economy with new jobs, technologies, and services for a world that will share the challenge of caring for an aging population.

I encourage my colleagues to ensure that health care reform is about new approaches to patient care, quality of life, and growing old with independence and dignity, not just about who's paying the bill. This is a chance to redesign our health care system with a new vision that sees the patient as the center of a more efficient and effective system. It is a chance to change our health care system to one that helps prevent disease, treat patients, support family caregivers, and enable seniors to maintain their independence, by bringing health care reform home.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BEGICH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, due to an unfortunate illness in my family, I regrettably missed rollcall No. 352. If I had been present, I would have voted "aye" on the passage of S. 1963, the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Service Act of 2009. This legislation is very important to veterans living in Montana. Many of Montana's veterans live in rural areas, hours away from the closest VA facility, and this bill will improve access to health care in those rural areas. I am pleased to see this bill passed with bipartisan support. We must uphold our promise to honor our veterans and provide them with the benefits they have proudly fought for and deserve.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

STAFF SERGEANT RYAN L. ZORN

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I rise today to express our Nation's deepest thanks and gratitude to a special young man and his family. I was saddened to receive word that on November 16, 2009, SSG Ryan Zorn of Wright, WY, was killed in the line of duty while serving our country in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Staff Sergeant Zorn died near the town of Talifar in northwestern Iraq from injuries sustained when his armored vehicle overturned.

Staff Sergeant Zorn was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 34th Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, out of Fort Riley, KS. Staff Sergeant Zorn grew up in Upton, WY, and

joined the Army following his graduation from Upton High School. He loved his country, and loved serving his country. His mother JoAnn says this is what he lived for. He was on his third tour of duty in Iraq. His family and his faith were very important to him. Friends and neighbors remember him as always open and friendly, with a broad smile and a wonderful sense of humor. He was dependable and generous, always willing to help others without hesitation.

It is because of Ryan Zorn that we are allowed to go about our daily lives as free people. America's men and women who answer the call to service and willingly bear the burdens of defending our Nation deserve the deepest respect and gratitude of all Americans. They put their very lives on the line every day, and because of them and their families, our Nation remains free and strong in the face of danger.

Jesus says in the Book of John that, "Greater love has no man than this, that he lay his life down for his friend." SSG Ryan Zorn gave his life, that last full measure of devotion, for you, me, and every single American. He gave his life serving and defending his country and its people, and we honor him for this selfless sacrifice.

Staff Sergeant Zorn is survived by his mother JoAnn, his father Myron, and his brother Todd. He is also survived by his brothers and sisters in arms of the U.S. Army. We say goodbye to a son, a brother, a friend, and an American soldier. The United States of America pays its deepest respect to SSG Ryan L. Zorn for his courage, his love of country and his sacrifice, so that we may remain free. He was a hero in life and he remains a hero in death. All of Wyoming, and indeed the entire Nation, is proud of him. May God bless him and his family and welcome him with open arms.

NATIONAL AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, each November, we celebrate National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month to honor the original inhabitants of our great nation and celebrate their formative impact on American history. This month is an opportunity to promote the tenets of tribal sovereignty and recommit to the Federal Government's treaty and trust responsibilities to American Indians. I would like to personally honor the nine treaty tribes of South Dakota: the Cheyenne River Sioux, the Crow Creek Sioux, the Flandreau Santee Sioux, the Lower Brule Sioux, the Oglala Sioux, the Rosebud Sioux, the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate, the Standing Rock Sioux, and the Yankton Sioux. Each tribe's rich heritage greatly influences the character of South Dakota.

It is fitting that hundreds of tribal leaders journeyed to our Nation's Capital in early November to participate

in the White House Tribal Nations Conference. President Barack Obama has committed to placing American Indian issues at the center of his administration, and the multiday conference was an important testament to the President's pledge to involve American Indian people in constructive dialogue. The conference allowed leaders from the 564 federally recognized tribes to interact directly with the President and representatives from the highest levels of the administration. The tribal leaders in attendance displayed the very diverse face of Indian Country. Each individual tribe forms a distinctive chapter of the American Indian story, yet the narrative contains many common themes of triumph and tragedy.

President Bill Clinton hosted the first tribal nations conference at the White House in 1994. It is not without precedent that President Obama invited leaders from all federally recognized tribes; however, I believe that this year's event is unmatched in its potential for progress. President Obama has charged each Cabinet agency with delivering a detailed plan of how to improve tribal consultation and how to address the complex challenges facing Indian Country. This Congress, with the leadership of President Obama, has an exceptional opportunity to improve the quality of life for American Indian tribes by consulting with tribal leaders and focusing on tribal sovereignty and the empowerment of Indian communities. For far too long, American Indians have endured a drastically underfunded health care system, crumbling education facilities, dismal economic prospects, and a subpar standard of living. It is essential to address this erosive cycle of poverty and marginalization in a thoughtful manner.

The diversity of American Indian tribes reflects the vibrant origins of our Nation. As the First Americans, sound American Indian policy is a precursor to our Nation's capacity to evolve and progress in an ever changing, diversifying society. We need to celebrate the proud ancestry and incredible sacrifices of American Indians. National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month reminds us to promote diversity rather than suppress it, as diverse values and cultures erect the foundation of the United States.

American Indians contributed to the formation of modern political institutions as tribal confederacies influenced the foundations of early American democracy. In every conflict since the Revolutionary War, tribal members have courageously sacrificed their lives to help defend and preserve these democratic ideals. As the Federal Government works to assert a modern environmental ethic that can address climate change and natural resource scarcity, we have much to learn from American Indian communities. The environmental consciousness inherent in tribal culture promotes conservation

and sustainability. American Indian communities have demonstrated that society can thrive and prosper without destroying the natural environment.

I hope this month provides students with the opportunity to explore the Thanksgiving story from the American Indian point of view. Observance of National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month reaffirms this Nation's respect for American Indian people. I encourage everyone to participate in our celebration of American Indians. I would like to pay tribute to the more than 65,000 American Indians in South Dakota whose heritage enriches our communities. While the month of November serves as an important testament to American Indian culture, it is critical to make a daily commitment to advancing the quality of life of American Indians, in order for our Nation to walk forward with strength and purpose.

NATIONAL SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE DAY

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Saturday, November 21, as National Survivors of Suicide Day. National Survivors of Suicide Day is a day of healing for those who have lost someone to suicide. In 1999, a Senate resolution created this annual event behind the efforts of Senator HARRY REID, who lost his father to suicide. This year, on November 21, over 230 conferences will take place internationally to allow survivors of suicide to connect with others who have experienced the tragedy of suicide loss.

The statistics about suicide are deeply concerning. In our Nation, suicide is the eleventh leading cause of death for all ages. Among young adults ages 15–24, there are approximately 100–200 attempts for every completed suicide. Suicide takes the lives of approximately 30,000 Americans each year, and a person dies by suicide about every 16 minutes. Suicide is an epidemic that tears families and communities apart, and we must do all that we can to prevent it.

A suicide survivor is an individual who has lost someone to suicide. It is estimated that for each suicide, seven other lives are altered forever because of the death. Every year, approximately 200,000 people become survivors due to this tragic loss of life. Many suicide survivors are left devastated, confused and weakened by their loss. Friends and family often experience depression, guilt, shock and anger. Unfortunately, there remains a stigma surrounding suicide and mental illness, and victims often shoulder some of the blame.

South Dakota is among a group of Western States that consistently has a higher rate of suicide than the rest of the country. The suicide rate for American Indians ages 15–34 is more than two times higher than the national average and is the second leading cause of death for this age group. The loss of

these young people is a real crisis. We must provide tribes with the resources they need to implement culturally sensitive suicide prevention programs. It is critical to strengthen the social fabric to help improve mental health. On American Indian reservations in South Dakota, I have seen the catastrophic ripple effect that one suicide can have. Given the alarming occurrence of "suicide clusters" and imitative deaths that have occurred in Indian Country this year, it is imperative to provide support for those left behind.

I hope that National Suicide Survivors Day is an opportunity to promote the broad based support that each survivor deserves. We are not doing enough to fight this tragic epidemic that is taking the lives of so many in our communities. We must concentrate our efforts on addressing the root causes of suicide in Indian Country and throughout the Nation. It is critical to expand access to mental health services, including a focus on education, prevention and intervention. Furthermore, we need to acknowledge the obstacles that suicide survivors face during their grieving and encourage the involvement of survivors in healing activities and prevention programs. This is one of the goals of the South Dakota Strategy for Suicide Prevention. Finally, I believe that with appropriate support and treatment, suicide survivors can lead effective advocacy efforts to eliminate stigma and reduce the incidence of suicide.

AMERICAN DIABETES MONTH

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I wish today to recognize November as American Diabetes Month. National studies estimate 23.6 million Americans live with diabetes, and nearly one-quarter of this population has not yet been diagnosed. The number of South Dakotans living with diabetes has doubled since 1998, with more than 39,000 adults diagnosed as diabetics in 2008 and an estimated 10,000 not yet diagnosed.

American Diabetes Month focuses on increasing awareness of the disease, strengthening prevention efforts, and identifying associated health risks. The disease carries with it an increased rate of heart disease and stroke, high blood pressure, kidney disease, blindness, and amputation of the lower extremities, among other associated health problems. For the past few decades, the prevalence of overweight and obesity has steadily increased nationwide, increasing the prevalence of type 2 diabetes. As the prevalence of diabetes increases, we are beginning to understand the costs to both our citizens' health and to our economy. The high costs to our government in direct medical and indirect costs of lost productivity, coupled with the personal costs of rising health care coverage and treatment, make type 2 diabetes control and prevention a national priority.